May 12, 1980

RAILWAY AGE

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THIRD OF A SERIES

Railroad technology

The state of the art—and beyond

Track machines

RAILWAY AGE

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FEATURES

Cover article, page 22

Page 34

Page 37

Railroad technology

Track machines

22 The target: Greater sophistication, reliability, and ease of operation

As L&N President Richard Spence puts it, the question management is asking is "How can we more intensely mechanize to get in and get out and let the operating department have the railroad back?" The search for answers is a continuing one.

34 VIA Rail gets its act together

Two years after VIA completed the takeover of Canada's intercity passenger trains, ridership is up 34% and, says President J. Frank Roberts, VIA would be showing a profit if it enjoyed the fixed-facility benefits accorded the airlines.

37 New York's subways: Business (and crises) as usual

There's a mixture of news both good and bad for New York City's train riders. New equipment is on the way; so is a fare increase. An $18-billion improvement program has been drawn up, but right now it's only a "wish list."

43 Railview: "Free-market" freight car rentals?

An AAR official says the practice of "trading" barge capacity on the St. Louis Merchants Exchange could have important implications for future railcar distribution.

NEWS

4 Short and Significant
10 Conrail ordered to refund surcharges
10 FRA airs new safety standards
14 NRUC sees threat to its survival
14 A stronger hand for Amtrak?
14 BART plans to order 90 new cars
19 "The swing to coal is under way"
41 Moving People
52 The Railroad Market

COMMENT

3 Inside
12 Watching Washington
19 Lines on Labor

DEPARTMENTS

46 100 Years Ago
47 People in the News
47 Suppliers
49 Transit
52 Carloadings
54 Products Report
56 New Literature
50 Professional Cards
51 Classified Advertising
55 Guide to Advertising

COVER: A ballast tamper at work on the Burlington Northern.

Market

CARLOADINGS

Loadings of revenue freight in the week ended Apr. 19 totaled 450,304 cars, according to the Association of American Railroads. This was a decrease of 33,715 cars, or 7.0%, compared with the corresponding week last year. Ton-miles generated by carloadings in the week ended Apr. 19 are estimated at 17.7 billion, a decrease of 1.4% below the corresponding week of 1979.

REVENUE FREIGHT CARLOADINGS

Commodity	Apr. 19 week	Apr. 12 week
Grain	29,129	28,371
Farm products	3,501	3,429
Metallic ores	31,471	29,980
Coal	115,916	117,864
Crushed stone, gravel & sand	13,527	13,846
Nonmetallic minerals	15,097	14,889
Grain mill products	16,786	16,030
Food and kindred products	17,618	17,286
Primary forest products	18,493	18,360
Lumber & wood products (except furniture)	7,930	7,851
Pulp, paper & allied products	20,413	20,423
Chemicals & allied products	27,599	28,390
Petroleum products	5,776	6,259
Stone, clay & glass products	15,892	15,611
Coke	6,347	6,971
Metals & products	18,454	18,043
Motor vehicles & equipment	17,834	16,274
Waste & scrap materials	14,322	13,251
Forwarder & shipping assn. traffic	10,936	10,622
All other carloads	43,076	41,119
LCL traffic	187	190
Total cars loaded	**450,304**	**445,059**
Cumulative total, 16 weeks	**1980 7,054,314**	**1979 6,933,557**
Estimated revenue ton-miles (billions) 16 weeks	**17.7**	**18.0**

PIGGYBACK LOADINGS

U.S. piggyback loadings for the week ended Apr. 12 totaled 30,982 cars (15.0% below the corresponding 1979 week) and 57,266 trailers or containers (down 10.4% from 1979). Cumulative volume for the first 15 weeks of 1980 is 502,473 (down 3.5% from 1979) and 911,674 trailers or containers (down 1.3% form 1979).

● *Connecticut Department of Transportation.*—The first of 13 SPV-2000 self-propelled cars ordered by ConnDOT from the Budd Co. has gone into service on the Norwalk-Danbury branch of Conrail's New Haven Division. The cars were purchased at a cost of $1 million each. The other 12 are to go into service on Amtrak's New Haven-Hartford-Springfield line in mid-May. Although the purchase of commuter cars by states has become commonplace, Connecticut is the first state to purchase cars for use by Amtrak on state rail lines.

● *Greenville Steel Car.*—Has increased its total freight car production capacity by 10% by expanding its West Shop facilities. A company spokesman said the 11,000-square-foot addition that has been made to the West Shop erection line, one of three operated by the company, will result in improved productivity and greater flexibility in the types of cars that can be assembled. The expansion was made necessary, the spokesman said, by increased demand for freight cars generally and the long-term demand for open-top coal cars in particular. Greenville Steel Car is a subsidiary of Ampco-Pittsburgh Corp, whose other operations include Ampco-Metal, Wyckoff Steel, and Pittsburgh Forgings.

● *Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.*—Will spend $7 million for track and signal rehabilitation on its 26-mile South Acton line. Track work will include installation of 26 miles of cwr and 20,000 new ties.

● *New Jersey Department of Transportation.*—Has received two bids for the supply of 57 new push-pull passenger cars. The lower bid, $38 million, is from the Budd Co. and proposes some exceptions to NJDOT's specifications. A $43-million bid without exceptions came from Bombardier of Canada.

● *Regional Transportation Authority (Chicago).*—Accepted delivery of 55 new bilevel cars built by the Budd Co. at a cost of $627,146 for each cab car and $544,396 for each trailer car. The new equipment was scheduled to go into service May 12 on the following lines: Chicago & North Western, five cab cars and 13 trailers; Illinois Central Gulf, one cab car and three trailers; Milwaukee Road, three cab cars and seven trailers; Rock Island District, C&NW, three cab cars and eight trailers; Burlington Northern, two cab cars and seven trailers. RTA Chairman Lewis W. Hill said the cars were assigned on the basis of a ridership count taken last December on all RTA-funded commuter roads. As part of its rail-improvement program, RTA is also equipping 12 E-8 2,400-hp C&NW locomotives with dual head-end power packages for more reliable heating and cooling.